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ABSTRACT

A specialized word attack skills program was designed to increase the reading ability of a target group of seven first grade students. These youngsters, placed in an average ability classroom, were performing below county standards. The program utilized learning centers, computers, and visual-auditory activities as motivational techniques. Students were instructed in word attack skills through the use of a zoological treasure hunt. Success of the program was measured by comparing pretest and posttest scores on the Unified County Reading Mastery Test, the Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test, and a teacher-created Reading Skills Inventory. Test results indicated increases of scores from primer to first grade reading level. Teacher observational records measured growth in critical thinking skills, and students demonstrated improvement in exercises involving organizing data, analysis, and using context clues. Appendixes include: the Unified County Reading Mastery Test; a teacher survey; the Brigance Criterion-Referenced Reading Test; the teacher-created reading skills inventory; a critical thinking skills checklist; a problem confirmation letter; and worksheets. (Author/LL)

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IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM USING A ZOOLOGICAL TREASURE HUNT TO ENHANCE WORD ATTACK SKILLS OF LOW PERFORMING FIRST GRADE STUDENTS

by

DENISE F. CHARLES

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A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

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ABSTRACT

Implementing A Program Using A Zoological Treasure Hunt To Enhance Word Attack Skills of Low Performing First Grade Students.
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Descriptors: Elementary Education/Reading Skills/Phonics/ Syllabication/Reading Comprehension/Context Clues/Vocabulary/ Spelling Skills/

A specialized word attack skills program designed to increase reading performance to the first grade level. The program utilized learning center, computers, and visual-auditory activities as motivational techniques. The students were instructed in word attack skills through the use of a zoological treasure hunt. Success of the program was measured by comparing pretest and posttest scores on the Unified County Reading Mastery Test, The Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test, and writer-created Reading Skills Inventory. Test results indicated increases of scores to the first grade reading level. Teacher observational records measured growth in critical thinking skills. Students demonstrated improvement in exercises involving organizing data, analysis, and using context clues. Appendices include materials, procedure, diagnostic data, and test results.

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Denise Charles

Denise Charles

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June 1991

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Authorship Statement	iii
Observer's Verification	iv
Table of Contents	v
Chapters	
I. Purpose	1
II. Research and Solution Strategy	8
III. Method	16
IV. Results	24
V. Recommendations	27
Reference List	29
Appendices	
Appendix A: Unified County Reading Mastery Test (Pre/Post Implementation)	32
Appendix B: Teacher Survey	35
Appendix C: Brigance Criterion-Referenced Reading Test	37
Appendix D: Brigance Criterion-Referenced Reading Test Pre/Post Implementation Comparison	44
Appendix E: Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory	47
Appendix F: Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory Pre-Implementation Results	50

Appendix G: Target Group Results On Write-Created Reading Skills Inventory Pre/Post Implementation. . . 52

Appendix H: Critical Thinking Skills Checklist. 55

Appendix I: Information of Target Group Pre/Post Implementation. 58

Appendix J: Problem Confirmation Letter 61

Appendix K: Worksheets. 63

CHAPTER I

Purpose

The school that served as the setting for the practicum was a public elementary school. The surrounding community was predominantly Caucasian and middle class. A small percentage of families had been affected by divorce and separation. The population in the area was growing. Parents were involved with the school. Parents also showed concern with what children were doing in the school.

The elementary school was founded in 1990 and was designed to accommodate approximately 750 students. The school housed 1,170 students with a breakdown of 57 percent Caucasian, 28 percent Black, and 15 percent other. Approximately 35 percent of the students were on free or reduced lunch.

Classes for the students from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade were provided which included special programs such as Chapter I, Speech, and Drop-Out Prevention. A day care program was provided before and after school for students.

The school personnel staff consisted of one principal, two assistant principals, 72 teachers, and 35 paraprofessionals. The guidance counselor provided services in counseling, test taking strategies, and conducted the "Say No To Drugs" Program for

elementary students. The media specialist operated the library and provided various club activities for the students.

The classroom setting for all grades was highly structured and disciplined. The school's philosophy was very pragmatic. The students' learning and well being was the main concern of the teachers in the school. The teachers believed each student was unique. The teachers readily adapted materials to individual learning styles.

The position of the writer was a first grade teacher. The responsibilities were to instruct the students, adapt materials to needs, and assess student progress. The writer participated on many school committees and was co-chairman of the fine arts committee.

The writer taught an average first grade class of 29 students. In the classroom there were seven Blacks, 20 Caucasians, and two Hispanic students. Academically, the students showed strong mathematical skills and were performing either on or above the first grade requirement. However, in reading the performance levels of the students were quite diverse. More than half the students were on or above the necessary skill requirement for first grade. Some of the students were performing below county standards in reading although placed in an average class. Some children exhibited deficiencies in word attack skills which may have caused overall reading difficulties. The students appeared to lack essential skills such as phonetic skills, spelling patterns, decoding skills,

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and context clues to meet success with first grade reading requirements.

Reading was comprised of a set of subskills that children must learn in order to read. Therefore, word attack skills were taught in conjunction with the subskills and applied in a meaningful context. Teachers taught children how to use specific strategies of word attack skills in order to assist the reading process (Egan, 1990). Instructing students in word attack skills was an essential objective to meet to enhance the reading process. Extra time spent with the students on specific word attack skills would be a key to success in student reading performance in the future.

Students were usually given a county mastery test after completing a reading level. The students must master the test in order to proceed to the next reading level. The students in the first grade were required to master levels 4-5 in order to proceed to the second grade. Each mastery test consisted of vocabulary, reading silently, and reading comprehension. As the students progressed through the reading levels, the skill requirements became more intense. A review of records in the writer's first grade class showed that 22 students were able to pass levels 4-5 with few difficulties. However, seven students never acquired the skills necessary to pass the level 4-5 mastery tests (Appendix A:32). As the students were performing on an average first grade level in all

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other subject areas, it would be expected that the students pass the mastery test set levels 4-5.

The large percentage of students failing to pass mastery tests at levels 4-5 may have been due to the present curricula not meeting the needs of the students. It was reasonable to assume that a few students might have difficulties in reading due to special learning difficulties. However, seven students showing a deficiency in reading implied that there was a breakdown in the curriculum and the current reading program was not meeting the needs of the students.

A survey of first grade teachers in the school was developed to ascertain perceptions of student abilities in word attack skills. Teachers agreed that students had inadequate word attack skills (Appendix B:35). The results indicated that the unified curriculum did not include enough practice in phonetics, syllabication, or context clues. Teachers also agreed that the reading mastery test was not a proper source of assessment in obtaining student knowledge of word attack skills.

The Brigance Criterion-Referenced Reading Test was administered to assess reading skills of the first grade students (Appendix C:37). The following reading sections were administered to the students: (1) Word Recognition, (2) Spelling, (3) Reading Comprehension, and (4) Oral and Sight Vocabulary. The results indicated that 14 students scored on first grade level, eight students scored above the first grade level, and seven students

scored below the first grade level (Appendix D:44). The seven students were unable to pass the mastery tests at levels 4-5 score on a primer level. A discrepancy of one level currently existed between average first grade students and the seven students unable to pass the reading mastery test at levels 4-5.

A writer-created Reading Skills Inventory Pretest (Appendix E:47) was administered to the 29 first grade students to test reading skills and knowledge in the following areas: (1) Beginning Sounds, (2) Ending Sounds, (3) Short Vowel Sounds, (4) Long Vowel Sounds, and (5) Word Identification. The results indicated that the average score from the test was 35 points or 70 percent. The breakdown showed that 22 students scored at or above the average and seven students scored below average (Appendix F:50). The seven students unable to master the mastery tests at levels 4-5 scored an average of 18 points or 34 percent on the test (Appendix B:35). The seven students exhibited deficiencies in word attack skills. A discrepancy of 36 percent existed between the average performance of the class and the seven students unable to pass mastery tests at levels 4-5. The seven students were functioning on a primer level in reading.

Upon observation of the seven students unable to pass tne mastery tests at the first grade level, the students exhibited difficulties involving organizing data, analysis, and using context clues. The students showed extreme difficulty with transferring

skills and knowledge from one subject to another. The seven students lacked the ability to use context clues to answer a problem in a story or a situation to find the solution. The students had difficulty completing story problems that involved steps of higher thinking. The seven students showed confusion when asked to rotate from center to center or to transfer information from one subject area to another.

The problem addressed was that seven students were performing below grade level expectation in reading and were showing specific difficulties in word attack skills. If the seven students were exposed to an intensive program of reading emphasizing word attack skills, at least 80 percent of the students would be expected to reach the average first grade reading performance level. Twenty percent of the students might ordinarily be expected to show difficulties and would need an alternate program due to specific learning difficulties. There was a need for the development of an intense specialized word attack skills program to ensure that the seven students reached county standards. Support for the development of the program was shown by the building administrator (Appendix I:58).

The purpose of the practicum was to develop a specialized program to increase the skills and abilities of first grade students in word attack skills. The target group (Appendix H:55) consisted of seven first grade students unable to pass reading mastery test at

levels 4-5. The average age of the students was six years old. The following objectives were projected.

After 12 weeks of participation in the specialized program, 80 percent of the target group would pass the Unified County Reading Mastery Test on levels 4-5 as evident by the reading test.

After 12 weeks of participation in the specialized program, 80 percent of the target group would increase scores of at least one grade level as measured by the Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test.

After 12 weeks of participation in the specialized program, 80 percent of the target group would improve scores by an average of 36 percent as measured by a writer-created Reading Skills Inventory.

After 12 weeks of participation in the specialized program, students' critical thinking skills would improve in the area of organizing data, analysis, and using context clues as measured by teacher observations of successfully completed sequential tasks.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Reading continued to challenge educators. The reading process had been viewed as complex. Reading had been considered as comprised of a set of subskills that were combined to provide understanding of the written word. The subskills included vocabulary, comprehension, word identification, and processing skills. In order for the reading process to be effective, word attack skills were considered an essential part of the process. As far back as 1874, society showed a definite unfamiliarity with utilizing basic word attack skills. Horace Mann, as cited by Chall (1989), a prominent educational leader, reminded teachers and school administrators that letters and letter sounds were unfamiliar to children learning how to read.

The United States congress commissioned a report in conjunction with the fact that illiteracy throughout the nation was growing rapidly (Needham, 1990). In agreement with the report, McNee (1989) pointed out that if a child was unable to read by the age of seven, the chances of the child ever being able to read was slim.

Perry and Sagen (1989) conducted a study to compare the vocabulary load in basal readers in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's. Results indicated that the students were required to learn an

abundance of vocabulary words each year without the essential word attack skills necessary to become familiar with new words. The students never received adequate instruction and failed to master words from the previous reading levels. The students lagged behind the average students in reading.

Another factor causing the deficiency in word attack skills was the fact that many of the school systems used basal reading instruction. Goodman (1989) suggested that basal readers may be the root to the national reading problem. Basal reading instruction utilized the whole-word method of instruction or phonetic methods and usually does not give enough specific instruction to word attack skills. Therefore, a supplemental word attack skills program should become a regular component in reading curricula. A program for reading instruction included a systematic and explicit method for word attack to enhance the reading process (Snider, 1990).

A study was conducted by Ehri (1987) in support of integrating a specialized word attack skills program into the reading curriculum. The subjects were selected and classified according to the ability to read and identify pre-primer and primer vocabulary words. Subjects were given word practice with words with simplified phonetics and words that achieved visual distinctiveness although no letters corresponded to sounds. Subjects were told the spoken word corresponding to each spelling word. Results indicated that the subjects learned to read phonetic spelling words much easier when

taught specific phonic and word identification skills. The findings also suggested that learning word attack skills enabled the subjects to become fluent readers. Extra time spent with subjects exhibiting difficulties could pay big dividends in the success of reading for the subjects.

Scott and Ehri (1990) found that pre-readers had not mastered sounds and were unable to reveal any words used in context. The ability to use a word in context was a vital aspect to progress in reading instruction. Scott and Ehri (1990) suggested to use word practice directly in phonetic and syllabication to enhance the student abilities in decoding words. The study concluded that the readers became more capable with the reading process due to specific instruction of context clue identification skills.

Veatch (1983) revealed that incorporating the language experience approach technique in conjunction with word attack skills assisted readers. The approach was highly organized, structured, and very systematic. The program was designed with five interrelated aspects of language. The first was the alphabet. Children proceeded from letter names to letter sounds, especially with use of vowels. The second aspect was writing. The breakdown of the rote recital of the alphabet into component letters allowed words to be spelled or a letter named as a precursor to formal reading. Key vocabulary was the third aspect. The teacher elicited a personal word from the students in a specific organized way. The

fourth aspect was the experience chart. The teacher made a chart and the students developed a booklet. The final aspect of the approach related to reading skills. The students chose a story and wrote specific vowels, syllabication, and context clues found in a story. Veatch (1983) described the approach as innovative and organized, thus allowing students to use word attack skills. Results indicated that student progress grew immensely.

Shell (1986) demonstrated through tachistoscopic techniques that a reader reacts to words, not to the individual sounds or specific word attack skills. The unfamiliarity with decoding skills caused readers to show difficulties when reading new words and using decoding skills.

Chall (1989) designed a six-week program to enhance word attack skills. The program suggested that if the students were taught specific word attack skills then reading ability would increase. The students were given The Brigance Inventory Reading Test to assess the weak areas of reading. The students were grouped and instructed to participate in The (Char-L) Intensive Phonetic Program (Bonds and Cobbs, 1990). The Char-L Program consisted of a series of lessons based primarily on the alphabet, the five phonetic rules, and a two-step decoding system. The students were instructed in small group tutorial situations using an eclectic approach of reading strategies. The strategies enabled the reader to experience a vast amount of techniques from paper-pencil use to advanced

technology. The activities were used in learning centers and small groups. The implementation plan included 30 minutes of intensive skills on all levels of learning. Results indicated that the students gained significantly in all areas of reading using the specialized program.

Haines (1987) used the Writing To Read (WTR) Program. The program influenced the reading process in the kindergarten program. The program was piloted in four elementary schools. The students were involved in a five-station laboratory of learning centers. Students moved through the stations for one hour per day. The skills incorporated in the stations were the following: (1) phonetics, (2) decoding, (3) syllabication, and (4) word clues. Students were involved and eager to learn. Results indicated that the WTR Program was favorable and attitudes toward reading became more positive.

Snider (1990) conducted a study involving instruction of word attack skills to an average first grade class. The program utilized teacher modeling and unison responding. Systematic rotation of centers was also a technique introduced. This technique allowed the students to build larger vocabularies, read more, and gain more efficient word attack skills. The results indicated that students receiving direct instruction in word attack skills became better readers.

Critical thinking skills needed to be incorporated with the instruction of word attack skills to provide a firm foundation for students to understand what is read. Meloth (1990) indicated that metacognition played a major role in attaining the skills necessary to read. Metacognition referred to self-awareness of the purposes and goals of reading as well as to the strategies that contributed to comprehension and problem solving.

It was important for students to understand the purpose of a skill in order to perform a specific task. Allowing students to develop strategies for problem solving as well as using context clues of the written message provided greater awareness of the learning process.

To enhance thinking skills of the students, techniques needed to involve models of teaching and problem solving. Joyce (1984) suggested that creating an environment in which study of human thought was a major component assisting in the reading process. Skills needed to be woven within the studies and mastery of information in the basic subjects. Techniques and strategies incorporated to instruct students to think and learn needed to be used on a regular basis. Practice and instruction were the keys to competency of thinking skills.

May and Bethel (1989) suggested that educators needed to provide students with thinking experiences in all subject areas. Two major components stressed as a prerequisite in order for students to grasp

thinking skills were identifying the question or questions in the problem and understanding what question was asked in order to find the solution. To help students acquire the skills in thinking, May and Bethel (1989) identified the following ways: (1) Have students read a problem silently, then have it read aloud; (2) have students restate the problem in their own words and identify the words used to uncover the clue to the problem; and (3) allow students time to think. Students develop an understanding that a solution is not easily found; it takes practice and logical thinking. Critical thinking was not just another set of skills in a textbook. Thinking was an important skill students could utilize for a lifetime.

The ideas of Veatch (1983) and Haines (1987) were incorporated into the new specialized word attack skills program. The techniques of language experience approach and learning centers was extremely beneficial in motivating the first grade students. Veatch (1983) incorporated the language experience approach in combination with a word attack skills program. Language experience materials in the program improved reading skills and word attack skills. Haines (1987) incorporated a five-station laboratory of learning centers which proved to be highly successful. Learning centers provided opportunities for the students to experience various hands-on activities. Through the use of learning centers the students were highly motivated and eager to learn.

The writer utilized techniques supplied by Veatch (1983) and Haines (1987) in order to provide ample opportunity of all learning styles. The incorporation of the use of learning centers and computers (Chall, 1989) in the specialized word attack program enhanced the capabilities of the students.

The writer was not utilizing a separate word attack skills program. Word attack skills taught in the classroom were through large group discussion and worksheets provided in the regular unified curriculum. The current curriculum was not meeting student needs.

The new specialized word attack skills program was implemented in the regular classroom setting. The program included four components of instruction to enhance the skills of the students. The components were the following: (1) Learning Center activities, (2) computer use, (3) visual and auditory learning activities, and (4) a treasure hunt. The combination of the activities increased word attack skills and provided a more positive approach in learning to read.

CHAPTER III

Method

The weekly word attack skills activities introduced were centered around strategies involving centers, computer use, auditory and visual learning skills, and various hands-on activities. Diversified activities enabled the students to capitalize on different learning styles. After each activity had been introduced, the activity continued to be practiced and reinforced throughout the 12-week period. Students worked at centers individually, with partners, or in small groups. Critical thinking skills were incorporated through activities involving problem solving and context clues. The students put to use word attack skills emphasized during the week to discover certain clues to the problem. Each week the students were given a specific problem to solve. A correctly answered problem provided a clue to the answer of the problem presented in the next week. The clues given weekly provided the key to the treasure chest.

For the purpose of this practicum, the implementation plan is discussed week by week in narrative form.

Week 1

The writer conducted a meeting with mentor to discuss the implementation plan for the program. The students were required to

participate daily in center activities using beginning and ending sounds. The students would cut and paste pictures in a booklet using each letter of the alphabet to represent a letter. The students said words to a partner and identified the ending sound.

Week 2

The writer introduced a phonetic skills center using auditory skills to complete the activity. The students listened to a short vowel song daily and then cut out pictures to identify with the short vowel words. The students were required to complete three worksheets (Appendix J:61).

Critical thinking skills were introduced through activities beginning this week. The students were placed with a partner to complete the weekly activity involving problem solving. The students were required to solve the answer to a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions about the paragraph to uncover the clue. The first animal the students identified was an elephant. The students were required to keep a list of clues given from week to week. The final week provided the last clue to the problem. Students finding the last clue were given a key to open the treasure chest. The critical thinking activity completed each week provided examples of organizing data, analysis, and using context clues. Seven students successfully identified the animal on the first tray (Appendix H:55).

Week 3

The students listened to an album in a large group and identified the long vowel words. The writer and students identified and charted the long vowel words. Then the students and writer made a short story using the long vowel words.

Critical thinking skills exercises for this week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students then wrote the clue down on the list. The animal for the week was a lion. Five students identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 4

The students visited the centers daily to reinforce the short and long vowel words. The students used the newspaper to identify and write 10 short and long vowel words. The students composed a booklet of the words found.

Critical thinking skills exercises for this week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue down on the list. The animal for the week was a zebra. Six students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 5

The students participated in whole-group activities making charts of unfamiliar words found in levels 4-5 of the reading book. The charts displayed sentences using the unfamiliar words and were shown throughout the classroom. The students labeled objects in the classroom to allow the students to recognize new words.

Critical thinking skills exercises for this week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue down on the list. The animal for the week was a rhinoceros. Six students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 6

The students participated in small group center activities using the newspaper. The students were required to cut words having one, two, three, and four syllables. The students then made charts to display the words in the appropriate column according to how many syllables the word has. The students had to find five words for each column. The students shared the charts with the class.

Critical thinking skills exercises for the week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue on the list.

The animal for the week was a giraffe. Seven students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 7

The students utilized the computer and printer to write sentences using MacMillan Reading Vocabulary Levels 4-5. The students printed out the sentences and identified the short and long vowel words. The students identified five of the unfamiliar words by using the skills taught.

Critical thinking skills exercises for the week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue on the list. The animal for the week was an alligator. Seven students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 8

The students read various stories from Levels 4-5 and discussed. Students identified words and rewrote the story using as many of the vocabulary words they could. The activity was completed in small groups.

Critical thinking skills exercises for the week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue on the list.

The animal for the week was a monkey. Six students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 9

The students read into a tape recorder with a partner. The students then listened to the tape and identified the words read incorrectly. The students made a list of the words. The students made flashcards of the words and practiced daily.

Critical thinking skills exercises for the week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue on the list. The animal for the week was a tiger. Seven students successfully identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 10

The students listened to the story "The Town Mouse" and "County Mouse" and then made a chart involving the sequence of events in the story. The students wrote a recap of the story and shared it with the group.

Critical thinking skills exercises for the week presented the next problem. The problem involved a short paragraph describing a certain animal. The students answered questions to uncover the clue to the animal described. The students wrote the clue on the list.

The animal for the week was a bear. Six students identified the animal on the first try (Appendix H:55).

Week 11

Students read the story "Ben The Bird" from the Level 6 reading book. The students used the skills taught to identify new words and discuss the story. The students wrote down unknown words and used the context clues and syllabication skills to identify the words.

Critical thinking skills exercises that were incorporated this week were for the students to read the final paragraph and uncover the last clue. The students were required to answer questions and use the clues from previous weeks to discover what animal was being discussed. The students were then asked the question, "What do all these animals have in common?" If they had successfully uncovered each clue, the students were able to tell the writer that all the animals lived in the zoo. The students correctly solving the problem were given a key to open the treasure chest. Seven students successfully identified the clue and identified the animals all belong in a zoo (Appendix H:55). The students were permitted to choose a stuffed animal from the treasure chest.

Week 12

The students took Levels 4-5 of the Unified County Reading Mastery Test. Students were administered a writer-created Reading Skills inventory posttest to assess the skills obtained throughout

the 12-week specialized program. Scores were recorded. Critical thinking skills successfully completed were reviewed (Appendix H:55).

CHAPTER IV

Results

The evaluation process took place over a period of 12 weeks. This process was necessary to assess the effectiveness of the solution strategies and implementation of this practicum. The measurement goals included increasing reading levels, improving at least one grade level on Criterion-Reference Reading Test, and writer-created Reading Skills Inventory. Critical thinking skills of the students in word attack skills was also expected to improve. The instruments utilized in the project were the following: (1) Unified County Reading Mastery Test, (2) the Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test, (3) writer-created Reading Skills Inventory, and (4) teacher observation in critical thinking skills.

The first objective was achieved by administering the Unified County Reading Mastery Test levels 4-5. The results were recorded and tabulated (Appendix A:32). The results were compared to pre-implementation. The comparison was expected to show that 80 percent of the target group would increase to reach first grade reading level. Eighty percent of the target group did increase to reach the first grade reading level. The first objective was achieved (Appendix A:32).

The second objective was measured by administering the Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test. The results were tabulated, recorded, and compared to the average scores obtained on the pre-implementation administration (Appendix D:44). The comparison was expected to show that 80 percent of the target group increased scores by at least one grade level. Eighty percent of the target group did increase scores by one grade level. The objective was achieved (Appendix D:44).

The third objective was measured by a writer-created Reading Skills Inventory. The results were tabulated, averaged, and compared to the pretest average scores (Appendix G:52). Eighty percent of the target group was expected to increase average scores by 36 percent to meet the first grade achievement level. Eighty percent of the target group increased average scores by 27 percent. The objective was achieved (Appendix G:52).

The fourth objective was measured by weekly teacher observations and records involving critical thinking skills in the areas of organizing data, analysis, and using context clues. Each activity successfully completed in the learning centers was recorded. If the activity was not completed, the activity was repeated until skill was evidenced. Teacher records indicated critical thinking skills successfully completed (Appendix H:55). The students enjoyed uncovering the specific clues given each week to the zoological treasure hunt. The students also were given an opportunity to visit

the zoo after successfully completing the critical thinking skills activity. All students in the target group successfully completed the critical thinking skills exercises. The fourth objective was achieved.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

A summary of results of the specialized word attack skills program was submitted to the building administrator.

The results discussed with the administrators were the following:

1. Through participation in the word attack skills program, 80 percent of the low performing first grade students were able to achieve at the first grade reading level as evidenced by scores obtained on the Unified County Reading Mastery Test levels 4-5.
2. Through participation in the word attack skills program, 80 percent of the low performing first grade students were able to read at the first grade level as evidenced by the Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test.
3. Eighty percent of the low performing first grade students improved word attack skills as indicated on the writer-created Reading Skills Inventory.
4. Teacher records indicated that low performing first grade students showed improvement in critical thinking skills through the successful completion of exercises in organizing data, analysis, and using context clues.

5. Low performing first grade students used first grade word attack skills to successfully complete an animal treasure hunt.

Upon approval of the administration, the program was presented in a department meeting. The program was utilized in the first grade curriculum to enhance instruction and provide teachers with successful strategies in word attack skills.

The program was also developed in workshop format and delivered to primary grade teachers. Successful strategies presented to the primary teachers were the following:

1. Use of learning center activities.
2. Practice with computers.
3. Provision of visual and auditory learning activities.
4. Treasure hunt to provide learning incentive.

Primary grade teachers may decide to adapt the word attack skills program as a permanent supplement to the reading program at the school.

Due to the increasing popularity of the need of a specialized program in word attack skills, the practicum may be of interest to other area educators. It was also made available to the area reading specialist as well as educators in other schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Unified County Reading Mastery Test

Pre/Post Implementation

APPENDIX A

Unified County Reading Mastery Test

Pre/Post Implementation

Pre-Implementation

Student	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	M	M	M	M			
2	M	M	M	M			
3	M	M	M	M			
4	M	M	M	M			
5	M	M	M	M			
6	M	M	M	M			
7	M	M	RT	M			
8	M	M	RT	M			
9	M	M	M	M			
10	M	M	M	M			
11	M	RT	M				
12	M	RT	M				
13	M	M	M				
14	M	M	M				
15	M	M	M				
16	M	M	M				
17	M	M	M				
18	M	M	M				
19	M	M	M				
20	RT	M	RT				
21	RT	RT	RT				
22	RT	RT	M				
23	NP	NP					
24	NP	NP					
25	NP	NP					
26	NP	NP					
27	NP	NP					
28	NP	NP					
29	NP	NP					

Note: Passed First Time = M
Passed Retest = RT
No Pass = NP

	Post-Implementation						
Student	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	M	M	M	M		M	M
2	M	M	M	M		M	M
3	M	M	M	M		M	M
4	M	M	M	M		M	M
5	M	M	M	M		M	M
6	M	M	M	M		M	M
7	M	M	RT	M		M	M
8	M	M	RT	M		M	M
9	M	M	M	M		M	M
10	M	M	M	M		M	M
11	M	RT	M			M	M
12	M	RT	M			M	M
13	M	M	M			M	M
14	M	M	M			M	M
15	M	M	M			M	M
16	M	M	M			M	M
17	M	M	M			M	M
18	M	M	M			M	M
19	M	M	M			M	M
20	RT	M	RT			M	M
21	RT	RT	RT			M	M
22	RT	RT	M			M	M
23	M	M	M				
24	M	M	M				
25	M	M	M				
26	M	M	M				
27	M	M	M				
28	NP	NP					
29	NP	NP					

Note: Passed First Time = M
Passed Retest = RT
No Pass = NP

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey
First Grade Teachers

APPENDIX B

Teacher Survey
First Grade Teachers

Please complete the following survey as honestly and correctly as possible. Place a check mark in the column that appropriately answers each question.

(SA) Strongly Agree (A) Agree (U) Undecided (D) Disagree

(SD) Strong Disagree

	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. The unified curriculum does not include enough phonetics, context clues, and syllabication.					
2. The Unified County Reading Mastery Test is not a proper source of assessment in obtaining student knowledge in word attack skills.					
3. The unified reading curriculum does not prepare students sufficiently in word attack skills.					
4. A specialized program to emphasize direct instruction in word attack skills is needed.					
5. It is necessary for students to acquire specific skills in phonetics, syllabication, context clues, and word identification to become fluent readers.					

APPENDIX C

The Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test

APPENDIX C

The Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test

Reading Vocabulary Comprehension

Name:_____

Directions: One word in each list does not belong with the other four words. Read the words in each list. Then underline the word that does not belong. Continue on each level until frustration begins or two consecutive words are missed.

Example:	door
	window
	<u>bike</u>
	floor
	wall

1.	a.	one	b.	boy	c.	tell
		three		tree		call
		two		mother		talk
		ball		girl		say
		six		father		bake
2.	a.	truck	b.	river	c.	breakfast
		bus		garden		dinner
		banana		pond		lunch
		train		sea		dollar
		airplane		pool		supper
3.	a.	professor	b.	July	c.	bead
		nurse		November		thumb
		soldier		April		throat
		pilot		Friday		knee
		machine		December		finger
4.	a.	tennis	b.	miserable	c.	government
		parachuting		horrible		citizen
		basketball		gloomy		pioneer
		bowling		delightful		native
		soccer		terrible		settler

5.	a.	satisfied	b.	hobble	c.	shred
		confused		shuffle		smash
		annoyed		straggle		celebrate
		tense		stumble		grind
		bothered		whimper		crush
6.	a.	mantis	b.	average	c.	mourned
		locust		unique		pulverized
		termite		normal		fragmented
		moth		standard		splintered
		vitamin		typical		crumbled
7.	a.	authentic	b.	cardinal	c.	exhausted
		original		heron		enthused
		genuine		granite		harassed
		reproduction		falcon		frazzled
		primary		loon		fatigued
8.	a.	abnormal	b.	scornful	c.	dwindle
		grotesque		contemptuous		conform
		absurd		compassionate		diminish
		median		disdainful		deteriorate
		gruesome		disgraceful		degenerate

Oral Reading

Directions: Continue to each level until five words are read incorrectly.

A.

Look at my little dog.
See it run and jump.
I like to play with my dog.
We can run.
We can jump.
Do you like my little dog?
My dog likes you.

B.

Look at me.
See what I can do.
I can run and jump.
Do you like to play?
I like to play.
Will you play with me?
We can run.
We can jump.

Pre-Primer

A.

The little boy saw the ball.
He ran to get it.
The ball is red and yellow.
The boy likes the ball.
He will play with his new ball.
He will have fun.

B.

The dog saw the little girl.
The girl did not know the dog.
She ran away from it.
The girl went into her house.
The dog was surprised.
It had come to play.

Primer

Oral Reading

Directions: Read each section aloud and continue until five words are incorrect.

A.

The woman asked, "Who is your friend?"
I said, "My friend is my cat."
We like to have fun.
We are looking for something to do.
Will you play a game with us?

B.

The cat saw two birds.
They were blue birds.
They were on the green grass.
They wanted something to eat.
They were looking for food.
Then they saw the cat.
They went away.

First Grade

A.

The man walked down the street.
His new hat made him happy.
Then the wind began to blow.
The hat came off his head.
"Stop!" he called.
The hat stopped in a tree.

B.

The girl had a picture of her kitten.
She wanted to show it to her friends.
She walked down the street.
But she didn't see her friends.
They had gone to a picnic.

Second Grade

Basic Sight Vocabulary

Directions: Students are required to read each word and continue until five words are missed consecutively.

a	look	but	on	ball
and	not	do	play	blue
can	the	down	run	boy
go	to	for	said	come
he	will	get	see	did
I	with	help	we	dog
in	you	jump	what	eat
is	are	little	all	find
it	at	me	am	from
like	big	my	away	funny

girl	no	surprise	yes	dad
good	put	that	your	day
green	ran	then	about	fast
happy	red	they	again	father
have	ride	this	back	fun
here	saw	up	be	give
home	she	want	by	had
house	so	was	call	has
let	something	where	came	her
man		who	car	hide

Spelling Grade Placement

Directions: Give test until two consecutive words are missed.

Grade 1	1.	me	Read to me.	me
	2.	not	That's not my coat.	not
	3.	has	She has a cold.	has
	4.	the	I saw the show.	the
	5.	she	Did she laugh?	she
	6.	was	Yesterday was cold.	was
	7.	he	Is he happy?	he
	8.	that	I like that boat.	that
	9.	my	This is my house.	my
	10.	make	We will make a cake.	make
Grade 2	11.	give	I will give the ball to you.	give
	12.	best	Do you like this toy best?	best
	13.	home	He wanted to go home.	home
	14.	just	The movie has just ended.	just
	15.	game	They wanted to play a game.	game
	16.	ride	Let me ride the horse.	ride
	17.	soon	It will be lunchtime soon.	soon
	18.	down	She walked down the stairs.	down
	19.	names	What are your parents' names?	names
	20.	fast	Don't drive so fast.	fast

APPENDIX D

The Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test Results

Comparison of Pretest/Posttest Results

APPENDIX D

The Brigance Criterion-Reference Reading Test Results
Comparison of Pretest/Posttest Results

Pre-Primer	Primer	First	Second	Third
PP	P	1	2	3

	Pretest				
Student	Word Recog.	Reading Spelling	Oral Comp.	Sight Reading	Vocab.
1	2	2	3	2	2
2	1	1	2	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1	1
5	PP	P	PP	PP	PP
6	1	1	1	2	2
7	1	1	1	1	1
8	2	2	3	2	2
9	2	2	3	2	2
10	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	1	1	1
12	1	1	1	1	1
13	PP	PP	P	PP	P
14	PP	PP	P	PP	P
15	2	2	2	2	2
16	1	1	1	1	1
17	1	1	1	1	1
18	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP
19	P	P	P	P	P
20	PP	PP	PP	PP	P
21	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP
22	1	1	1	1	1
23	2	2	1	2	2
24	1	1	1	1	1
25	1	1	1	1	1
26	1	1	1	2	1
27	1	1	1	2	1
28	1	1	1	1	1
29	1	1	1	1	1

Pre-Primer	Primer	First	Second	Third
PP	P	1	2	3

Student	Posttest				
	Word Recog.	Reading Spelling	Oral Comp.	Sight Reading	Vocab.
1	2	2	3	2	2
2	1	1	2	1	1
3	1	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1	1
5	P	1	P	P	P
6	1	1	1	2	2
7	1	1	1	1	1
8	2	2	3	2	2
9	2	2	3	2	2
10	1	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	1	1	1
12	1	1	1	1	1
13	P	1	1	1	1
14	1	1	P	1	1
15	2	2	2	2	2
16	1	1	1	1	1
17	1	1	1	1	1
18	P	1	P	1	1
19	1	1	1	1	1
20	P	P	P	P	P
21	PP	PP	PP	PP	PP
22	1	1	1	1	1
23	2	2	1	2	2
24	1	1	1	1	1
25	1	1	1	1	1
26	1	1	1	2	1
27	1	1	1	2	1
28	1	1	1	1	1
29	1	1	1	1	1

APPENDIX E

Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory

APPENDIX E

Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory
Pretest and Posttest

Part 1:

Listen while I say each word, then place the beginning consonant sound in the blank.

1) _____at
2) _____eg
3) _____x
4) _____all
5) _____irl
6) _____eart
7) _____og
8) _____ill
9) _____ot
10) _____ed

_____ (Possible 10 Points)

Part 2:

Listen while I say each word, then place the ending sound you hear in the blank.

1) ba_____
2) do_____
3) ma_____
4) pi_____
5) nai____
6) soc_____
7) han_____
8) co_____
9) te_____
10) mo_____

_____ (Possible 10 Points)

Part 3:

Listen while I say each word, then place the correct short sound in the blank.

1) c___t
2) w___b
3) t___g
4) f__sh
5) p___n
6) sh__p
7) b___g
8) l___g
9) c___t
10) h__nd

_____ (Possible 10 Points)

Part 4:

Listen while I say each word, then place the correct vowel in the blank.

1) g__me
2) b__ne
3) n__ne
4) c__ne
5) l__ve
6) g__te
7) c__be
8) gl__e
9) fl__me
10) v__ne

_____ (Possible 10 Points)

Part 5:

Say each of the words below.

1) grasshopper
2) macaroni
3) butterfly
4) scissors
5) lunchroom
6) elephant
7) everything
8) television
9) surprise
10) invention

_____ (Possible 10 Points)

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Total Score

APPENDIX F

Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory Pre-Implementation Results

APPENDIX F

Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory Pre-Implementation Results

Student	Beginning Sound	Ending Sound	Short Vowels	Long Vowels	Word ID	Total Score
1	10	10	10	10	10	50
2	10	10	10	10	9	49
3	10	10	10	9	9	48
4	10	10	10	10	10	50
5	10	10	10	9	9	48
6	10	10	10	10	9	49
7	10	10	9	9	8	47
8	10	10	8	8	8	44
9	10	10	10	9	9	48
10	10	10	10	9	7	47
11	10	10	8	7	7	42
12	10	10	8	8	8	44
13	10	10	9	9	9	47
14	10	10	9	7	9	45
15	10	10	8	6	6	40
16	10	10	8	6	6	40
17	10	10	9	7	6	42
18	9	9	9	7	6	40
19	10	9	9	9	8	45
20	10	9	7	7	6	40
21	10	9	7	7	6	40
22	10	9	9	7	6	41
23	9	3	1	1	1	15
24	7	5	1	2	3	18
25	8	6	5	1	2	22
26	10	5	3	3	2	23
27	5	5	5	3	4	22
28	3	2	1	1	0	7
29	2	2	2	0	0	6
Avg.	9	8	7	6	6	36

APPENDIX G

Target Group Results on Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory

Pre/Post Implementation

APPENDIX G

Target Group Results on Writer-Created Reading Skills Inventory

Pre/Post Implementation

	Pre-Implementation					
Student	Beginning Sound	Ending Sound	Short Vowels	Long Vowels	Word ID	Total Score
1	9	3	1	1	1	15
2	7	5	1	2	3	18
3	8	6	5	1	2	22
4	10	5	3	3	2	23
5	5	5	5	3	4	22
6	3	2	1	1	0	7
7	2	2	2	0	0	6
Avg.	7	3	2.6	1.6	1.9	18.9

Student	Post-Implementation					
	Beginning Sound	Ending Sound	Short Vowels	Long Vowels	Word ID	Total Score
1	10	6	5	3	3	27
2	10	6	4	2	3	25
3	10	8	6	3	7	34
4	6	8	6	4	6	30
5	7	5	8	6	4	30
6	5	5	3	3	4	20
7	6	4	5	4	4	23
Avg.	8	6	5	3	4	27

APPENDIX H

Critical Thinking Skills Checklist

APPENDIX H

Critical Thinking Skills Checklist

Week #	Number of Tries 1	2	3	4	5	Completed Task? (Yes Or No)
Week 2						
Organizing info. given to identify the animal.	7 Stud.					Yes
Week 3						
Used organization skills & analysis to identify the animal of the week.	5 Stud.	2 Stud.				Yes
Week 4						
Used context clues to identify the animal for the week	6 Stud.	1 Stud.				Yes
Week 5						
Used organization skills & analysis to identify the animal	6 Stud.	1 Stud.				Yes
Week 6						
Used context clues to identify the animal for the week	7 Stud.					Yes

Week #	Number of Tries 1	2	3	4	5	Completed Task? (Yes Or No)
Week 7 Used organization skills to identify the animal for the week.	7 Stud.					Yes
Week 8 Used context clues to identify animal for the week.	6 Stud.	1 Stud.				Yes
Week 9 Organized data and analysis of para. to identify the animal.	7 Stud.					Yes
Week 10 Used context clues to identify the animal.	6 Stud.	1 Stud.				Yes
Week 11 Organized data and used context clues to identify the animal. Discovered how each animal was linked together week to week	7 Stud.					Yes

APPENDIX I

Information on Target Group

Pre/Post Implementation

APPENDIX I

Information on Target Group

Pre/Post Implementation

		Pre-Implementation		
Student	Age	Unified Reading Mastery Test Levels 4-5	Brigance Criterion-Ref. Test	Writer-Created Skills Inventory Score
1	6	No Pass	Pre-Primer Level	15
2	6	No Pass	Primer Level	18
3	7	No Pass	Pre-Primer Level	22
4	7	No Pass	Primer Level	23
5	7	No Pass	Primer Level	22
6	6	No Pass	Pre-Primer Level	7
7	6	No Pass	Pre-Primer Level	6

		Post-Implementation		
Student	Age	Unified Reading Mastery Test Levels 4-5	Brigance Criterion-Ref. Test	Writer-Created Skills Inventory Score
1	6	Pass	Primer Level	27
2	6	Pass	Primer Level	25
3	7	Low Pass	Pre-Primer Level	34
4	7	Pass	Primer Level	30
5	7	Pass	Primer Level	30
6	6	Pass	Primer Level	20
7	6	Pass	Primer Level	23

APPENDIX J

Problem Confirmation Letter

APPENDIX J

Problem Confirmation Letter

To Whom it may concern:

As assistant principal of this school, I confirm the need for an alternative reading program. The students are experiencing difficulities with word attack skills. They are performing below the required standards for first grade students. They have not mastered the necessary skills to pass levels 4-5 on the Unified County Reading Mastery Test. This is definitely a problem for our first grade students.

Thank You.

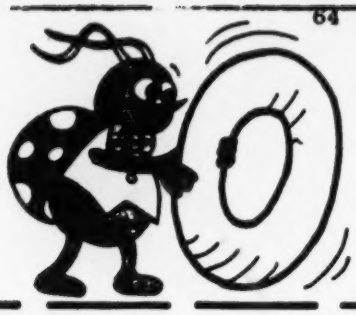
Judith D. Asbury

APPENDIX K

Vowel Worksheets

Frank Schaffer - Vowel Workbook
1st + 2nd Grade

KOB



Unscramble each word. The first letter is underlined.

ugm _ _ _

lleb _ _ _ _

ipn _ _ _

tefe _ _ _ _

teo _ _ _

ienn _ _ _ _

teki _ _ _ _

usn _ _ _

eobn _ _ _ _

der _ _ _

ckos _ _ _ _

ebe _ _ _

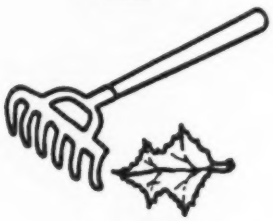
Find each new word in the puzzle below. Circle the words with short vowel sounds in blue. Circle the words with long vowel sounds in green. Words go across → and down ↓.

b	e	e	g	r	m	t	v	s	m	b	o	n	e
r	b	e	l	l	g	o	c	u	g	r	h	s	f
s	h	v	k	t	r	e	t	n	t	p	r	e	d
g	s	m	i	m	w	y	g	f	e	e	t	j	p
u	p	h	t	h	s	o	c	k	y	g	m	x	i
m	v	t	e	u	n	i	n	e	f	b	s	t	n

Let's Review . . .

Read each statement. Fill in the missing vowel.
Color each picture the correct color.

1. A red r ____ se in a blue v ____ se



2. A brown r ____ ke and a green l ____ af

3. A yellow b ____ e on a brown h ____ ve

4. A red t ____ e and a blue s ____ it

5. A blue c ____ be in the yellow j ____ ice

6. A green s ____ x on the red g ____ te

Read each word. Color the ☺ yellow if a word has a short vowel sound. Color the ☺ red if a word has a long vowel sound.

☺ seal	☺ tune	☺ cape
☺ gum	☺ list	☺ egg
☺ bell	☺ mop	☺ boat
☺ hive	☺ cat	☺ up
☺ vest	☺ jeep	☺ rock
☺ duck	☺ bat	☺ nine
☺ gate	☺ ring	☺ top
☺ mask	☺ fire	☺ pail
☺ pine	☺ fish	☺ lid
☺ leaf	☺ rain	☺ pie